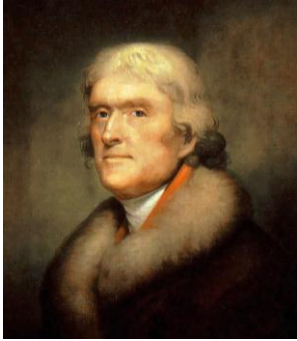


# Early American Rhetoric A Scrapbook

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Thomas Jefferson and *The Declaration of Independence*  
“All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man.”

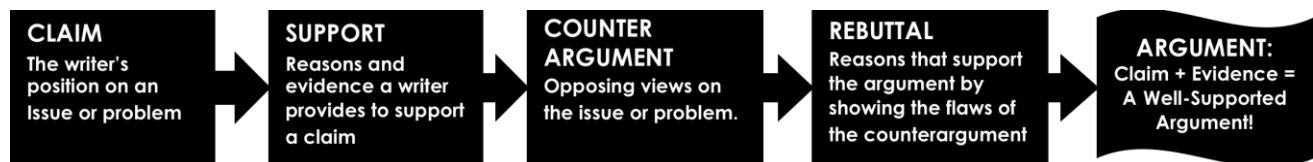
Influenced by John Locke, Jefferson believed that people are born with three **natural rights**, which form a **social contract** between man and government:

- **Life:** everyone is entitled to live once they are created.
- **Liberty:** everyone is entitled to do anything they want to so long as it doesn't conflict with the first right.
- **Estate:** everyone is entitled to own all they create or gain through gift or trade so long as it doesn't conflict with the first two rights.

Jefferson emphasizes these natural rights in a **logical argument** for independence from England.

## What is Argument?

An argument expresses an opinion on an issue and supports it with reasons and evidence. There are four important parts to an argument:



As you read the four parts of Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, consider how he structures the argument that the colonists should separate from England.

**The Preamble:** In the first paragraph on page 156, summarize the **claim** that Jefferson presents. What type of **evidence** will he provide to support this claim?

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**The Declaration:** In the second paragraph on page 156-157, Jefferson outlines the **argument**, **counterargument**, and **rebuttal** to support the preamble's **claim**.

**Argument:** What rights give the colonists the justification to separate from England?

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**Counterargument:** For what reason does Jefferson suggest that some might disagree with his argument?

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**Rebuttal:** How does Jefferson defeat the counterargument with evidence that leads to the next section?

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## The Complaints:

In paragraphs three through twenty-three on pages 157-159, Jefferson catalogs the **evidence** of how King George III of Great Britain violated the colonies.

To what **audiences** do you think Jefferson and the Continental Congress directed this list of grievances?  
Do you think this catalog is effective? What in his style makes the list effective?

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### What is Parallel Structure?

A repetition of grammatical structures — phrases, clauses, or sentences — that expresses ideas of equal weight through rhythm and balance. Ideas presented through parallel structure come across more clearly because the sentences are easier to read.

Highlight or underline the repeated grammatical structures in the following example:

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”

— John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address

Give two examples of how Jefferson uses parallel structure (repeated grammatical structures in this section.  
(HINT: Look at the section as a whole and look at paragraph fifteen in particular)

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How does this stylistic effect heighten the meaning of Jefferson’s point?  
(HINT: Why does Jefferson choose to repeat certain words and phrases?)

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## The Conclusion:

In the final two paragraphs, Jefferson concludes with a call to action, with a formal declaration.

What does the **United States** declare to the world?

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Under what power do they make this declaration? (HINT: Who is the “Supreme Judge of the world”?)

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What rhetorical appeal – ethos, pathos, logos – does Jefferson use to strengthen his argument? Why do you feel this appeal is the most effective? Record one quote that shows why you feel this appeal dominates the *Declaration*.

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